

Copy.

101.

Branch Mint of the U. States.
December 2^d 1857.

Sir.

It appears that a complaint has been made to the Treasury department as to the loss on California gold in this mint, as compared with the Philadelphia mint. Both the melting and assaying departments are therein attacked. The writer says furthermore that these complaints are universal. This latter assertion I unhesitatingly pronounce to be false; for several of the most respectable brokers in this city, have assured me to the contrary, affirming that after having tested both mints, they gave the preference to this. Some broker may have been disappointed in his calculations, realizing less than he expected, or perhaps losing money. But what has the mint to do with this? He frequently after the arrival of a Steamship from Chagres notices a variation of more than one hundred millimeters on the various lots of gold deposited in the mint. This is apparent to the eye when the assay slip is rolled out. The rich yellow colour indicating gold much above our

standard, while that of a pale colour indicates a quality of gold below our standard, more or less.

The difference arises from the quantity of silver that may be alloyed with the gold, which according to the title of the gold may vary from 160 to 40 millimes. It must be remembered that California is a country of great extent, extending from San Diego in the South, to the line of Oregon in the North - a distance of 8 or 900 miles, with a breadth, exclusive of the great basin, varying from 150 to 350 miles. This includes the gold as far as the country has been explored. From these facts, we should naturally expect to see a vast difference in the geological structure of the country, its soils, rocks, minerals &c. Volcanic agency has left traces of former activity, which is sufficient to account for every disparity of title. I would further observe, that, from the difficulty of ascertaining the title of a lot of gold dust, before it is melted and the assay chip cut off & rolled, the purchase is rather a hazardous speculation and an error of judgement may lead to great disappointment in the final result. However a broker may occasionally grumble, it is certain that the Californians who have deposited gold dust at this

Mint, have never to the knowledge of any officer
of the Mint, complained of the title,
Not long since a Statement appeared in the
papers, in which a Commercial House in San-
Francisco, complained of the Philadelphia Mint,
An hundred thousand dollars worth of gold dust,
said to have been well mixed, was forwarded to
that Mint in four or five distinct parcels at certain
intervals. The variation on them was stated
at from 6 to 7 percent.

Very respectfully,
Yours faithfully,
Cyrus

William P. Axt
Agent.

To
J. M. Walcott
Superintendent of the Mint, U.S.A.